

A New Way to Peace

Peace and freedom are not easily achieved. They cannot be attained by force. They come from mutual understanding and cooperation, from a willingness to deal fairly with every friendly nation in all matters — political and economic.

—President Harry S. Truman, March 1947

After decades of war the Marshall Plan set the stage for recovery in Europe. Still, bitter rivalries would need to be overcome and some sovereignty surrendered in order to end further cycles of violence. In 1951, with the U.S. urging cooperation, six Western European nations—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands—broke with the past to create a plan that would use their industries and vital resources for peaceful production rather than for instruments of war.



On April 30, 1953, Jean Monnet received the first European cast-iron brick combining materials from ECSC member countries and symbolizing the new cooperation of countries so recently at war.

These nations worked together to form the European Coal and Steel Community. French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, for whom the plan was named, stated in 1950 that the Coal and Steel Community would “change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.” European industry would now produce materials to rebuild factories, homes, transportation systems and energy plants.



Paul Hoffman, Dirk Stikker, and W. Averell Harriman

Two men who worked tirelessly to integrate the economies of countries so recently at war were Dutch Foreign Minister Dirk Stikker and Belgium’s Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak. Spaak chaired the OEEC Council from 1948–1950, and Stikker held the same post from 1950–1952.

I would like to emphasize as forcefully as I can and with deepest conviction that creating “Europe” is above all a problem of economic, social, military, political, and diplomatic dimensions. To create Europe is first to serve an idea, to try to save a continent and a civilization.

—Paul-Henri Spaak



Paul-Henri Spaak



Jean Monnet, known today as the “Father of Europe”

Frenchmen Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman found a way for nations to put the industries of war to peaceful uses. Monnet was the architect and first President of the European Coal and Steel Community, and Schuman sponsored the treaty that established the Community—the forerunner of the European Union.

We are uniting people, not forming a coalition of states.

—Jean Monnet

The harsh lessons have taught me ... that when an objective, carefully reasoned judgment ... urges us on to new, and even revolutionary, undertakings, even when such initiatives collide with entrenched custom, age-old antagonisms, and long-standing routine, we must hold fast and persevere in our path.

—Robert Schuman



Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister 1948–1952